



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

1115 Washington St. SE OB2 • PO Box 45700 • Olympia WA 98504-5700
(360) 902-7999 • TDD (360) 902-7906 • FAX (360) 902-7588

July 24, 2006

TO: Regional Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators
Administrator, Licensed Resources
Area Administrators, Licensed Resources
Children's Administration

FROM: Steven Wickmark, Director
Field Operations
Children's Administration

SUBJECT: **“FOSTER CARE TO 21” PROGRAM APPLICATION AND PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Youth who are interested in the Foster Care to 21 program must complete an application (attached) in order to be considered and accepted into the program. This includes youth who have had their foster care extended under the Interim Continuing Foster Care Policy (see below).

Youth may receive an application in a number of ways (e.g. from a social worker, Independent Living Program (ILS), foster parent, Foster Parent website, etc.) so it is important that the ILS Program Manager at headquarters and social workers coordinate to ensure all youth who are interested and qualified receive an application and are entered into the Continuing Foster Care program (also known as the “Bridge program”) (see details below).

Below are the descriptions of the Foster Care to 21 program, the Interim Continuing Care policy, the procedures for the Foster Care to 21 application process, and the process for notification of acceptance.

FOSTER CARE TO 21 PROGRAM

The Foster Care to 21 program provides the department the authority to allow up to 50 youth reaching age 18 to continue in foster care or group care in order to participate in or complete a post high school academic or vocational program and receive necessary support and transition services up to age 21.

Fifty youth per year will be selected. Selection for this year will be made in September 2006.

INTERIM POLICY FOR CONTINUED FOSTER CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to keep foster care payments and support services available to youth who are turning age 18 and interested in the Foster Care to 21 program, CA developed an interim policy. The interim policy extends foster care to qualified youth through September 30, 2006, until a decision can be made about which youth will be accepted into the program.

In order to qualify for the interim extension of foster care, the youth must be 18 (or about to turn 18), and meet one of the following criteria:

- High school graduate or GED certificate and acceptance into post high school academic or vocational program.
- High school graduate or GED certificate and a submitted post high school academic or vocational program application which is pending a decision for acceptance.

After identifying potentially qualified youth who want to be considered for the Continuing Foster Care Program, the CA social worker will:

1. Verify that the youth meets the criteria for the extension of foster care (as stated above in the policy).
2. Extend foster care for the youth, with the same provider and at the same rate through September 30, 2006.
3. Complete a Voluntary Placement Agreement and have the youth sign the agreement.
4. E-mail the youth's information, to the foster care medical team at fcmt@dshs.wa.gov to ensure the youth continues to receive medical coverage. In the e-mail the social worker must include the following:
 - In the subject line of the e-mail use: **HB2002**
 - In the body of the e-mail include: The **youth's name**, **CAMIS ID#** and the **name of the school the youth plans to attend** (if known)

The foster care medical team at Heath and Rehabilitative Services Administration (HRSA) will enter the youth's information into their data base and provide that information to the CA headquarters program manager.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

All youth interested in the Foster Care to 21 program must also complete and submit an application (attached) in order to be considered for the program. Applications are to be submitted to the Headquarters ILS Program Manager at:

Rick Butt, ILS Program Manager
DSHS, Children's Administration Headquarters
PO Box 45710 - 1115 Washington St. SE
Olympia, WA 98504-5710
CA Headquarters Responsibility

The Independent Living Services (ILS) Program Manager at CA headquarters will mail FACT sheet (attached) for youth and an application to all youth who were approved for the Continuing Foster Care Program (or Foster care “Bridge Program”) and whose names were e-mailed to the Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration’s (HRSA) foster care medical team between **June 1, 2006 and July 31, 2006.** (*Social workers will provide applications after July 31*).

The ILS program manager will notify the social worker if applications are received that are not on the list of approved medical extensions from HRSA and ask the social worker to verify that the youth qualifies and that foster care is extended.

CA Social Worker Responsibilities

CA social workers will provide a FACT sheet and an application to all youth approved for the Continuing Foster Care Program **after July 31, 2006**, unless the youth has already received an application from another source.

If the youth completes an application and sends it to headquarters without informing the CA social worker, the Headquarters ILS Program Manager will contact the social worker to verify the youth is qualified and extend foster care.

If a social worker receives a completed application from a youth, the social worker will verify the youth meets the criteria, forward the application to the Headquarters ILS program manager and extend foster care for the youth through September 30, 2006.

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE FOSTER CARE TO 21 PROGRAM

The Headquarters ILS program manager will notify all youth and their social workers of acceptance or non-acceptance into the Foster Care to 21 program by mid-September.

We have updated the CA website to include:

- A copy of this memo
- The application
- A FACT sheet for Youth

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Rick Butt, Independent Living Program Manager, in the Division of Program and Practice Improvement, at (206) 923-4891 or e-mail him at rlbu300@dshs.wa.gov.

Attachment